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AUG 11

Food for Summer Picnics

A broadcast by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Wallace Kadderly, Office of Information, broadcast Thursday, July 10, 1941, in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, over stations associated with the NBC Blue Network.

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WALLACE KADDERLY:

In Washington ... and it's another warm, sunny day ... the kind of a day that makes a person think of the old swimmin' hole in the creek, down at the bottom of the hill under the trees. ... But no time for such lazy lingering thoughts now. Here's Ruth Van Deman with more suggestions from over Bureau of Home Economics way.

RUTH VAN DEMAN:

Don't think you're the only one, Wallace, with lazy lingering thoughts. This kind of weather affects me that way, too. It makes me want to get out the old hickory-splint picnic basket and quick pile in it the makin's for some sandwiches and a John Baker salad.

KADDERLY:

What's a John Baker salad?

VAN DEMAN:

Don't you remember? John said up here the other day that a fresh vegetable eaten with salt is his idea of a perfect salad?

KADDERLY:

Yes, I do remember that. And there certainly couldn't be an easier kind to take on a picnic. Make mine ripe tomatoes.

VAN DEMAN:

Ripe tomatoes au naturel.

KADDERLY:

Check.

VAN DEMAN:

And I'll wash a head of lettuce and let it crisp in the refrigerator in a cheesecloth bag, ready to drop into the picnic basket. And a cucumber or two would be good ... to peel and cut into strips and eat with salt.

KADDERLY:

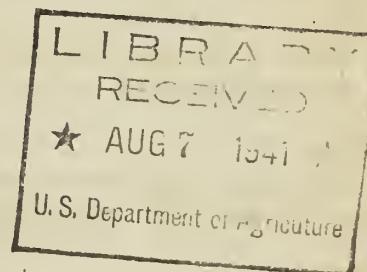
Good. Cucumber on a hot day is almost as good as a drink of water.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, I understand that in hot dry countries where water is scarce and not safe, people sometimes carry a cucumber to quench the thirst. A cucumber's 96 percent water.

KADDERLY:

More watery than watermelon. D'you think your hickory splint basket can hold an ice-cold watermelon?



(Over)

VAN DEMAN:

Nothing like trying. I'll nominate you a committee of one to bring the watermelon. I've got to concentrate on the sandwiches now.

KADDERLY:

That's right. They are the stick-to-the-ribs part of this meal ... But one thing I'm sure you won't be putting into your sandwiches is cheese ... I mean cheddar cheese.

VAN DEMAN:

No, I'm going to do as Secretary Wickard asked and eat less cheddar cheese, so that we can send more cheese to the British people.

KADDERLY:

The reason for that is of course cheese is concentrated food. It ships in small space in comparison with its high food value. A pound of cheese - whole milk cheddar cheese - represents between 3 and 4 quarts of milk. And the British people depend much more on cheese than we do.

VAN DEMAN:

Of course you know how cheddar cheese got its name.

KADDERLY:

I'm not sure I do. Cheddar is just one of those names that seem to go with cheese.

VAN DEMAN:

Long, long ago cheesemakers in Cheddar, England, developed the method of making and curing this type of cheese in the Cheddar caves.

KADDERLY:

Then in a way we're sending back to England now, the fruits of a method she passed on to us with the early colonists.

VAN DEMAN:

Yes, I suppose you might say it's like sending your next-door neighbor a loaf of bread made by the recipe she gave you.

KADDERLY:

It's on a purely voluntary, good-will basis that the Secretary of Agriculture is asking the American people to eat less cheese here so as to leave more to ship to England.

VAN DEMAN:

That's right. We don't have to carry to market a cheese card in order to be able to buy a few ounces ... the way all the women of Europe are doing.

KADDERLY:

No, we're simply asked to eat less cheese for the time being, until supplies can catch up with demand ... But, Ruth, how about that picnic basket? What kind of sandwiches are we going to have in place of cheddar cheese?

VAN DEMAN:

That's easy. There are dozens of other good substantial fillings for sandwiches. For one - peanut butter - factory made or home-made.

KADDERLY:

Fine. Peanuts are a food we have plenty of - a surplus in fact. And I like the taste of peanut butter very much. And I know it's nutritious, concentrated food. But how to keep it from concentrating on the roof of the mouth is something I haven't yet achieved.

VAN DEMAN:

Thin it down some ... with milk, or salad dressing, or catsup, or chili sauce, or even a little water.

KADDERLY:

Would a leaf of lettuce or a slice of raw tomato in the sandwich do the trick too?

VAN DEMAN:

Yes. Anything that breaks up the stiffness of the peanut butter. Some people like chopped raw onion, or celery, or green pepper, or olives, in a peanut butter sandwich. Or for a sweet one, jelly or dried fruit. And whole wheat bread is a help too.

KADDERLY:

Isn't there a particular point to using whole wheat bread with peanuts in any form? Seems to me I remember your saying once that the proteins of the peanut and the wheat supplement each other in a particularly good way.

VAN DEMAN:

You have an A-1 memory, Wallace. The proteins of peanuts and wheat do combine to make a very high quality protein - practically like that of meat, or cheese.

But there are lots of other kinds of hearty sandwiches. Cold baked beans mixed with pickle or catsup and spread on brown bread are mighty good eating.

KADDERLY:

That's a new one to me.

VAN DEMAN:

And liver and bacon, ... bacon and tomato, ... smoked tongue, ... chopped corned beef with dill pickle ... smoked fish ...

KADDERLY:

Smoked salmon?

VAN DEMAN:

Smoked any kind of fish. Smoked salmon is a real delicacy to us here on the East Coast.

KADDERLY:

It's an old Indian custom out in the Northwest.

VAN DEMAN:

Some of the salmon the Indians smoked I expect was a little high and hard.

KADDERLY:

You bet it was. I'd rather have canned salmon than that kind of smoked salmon any day.

VAN DEMAN:

That's all right as a sandwich filling too. It seems to me the test for a good sandwich filling is this ... soft or tender enough so you can bite through it easily. And flavorful enough to make the sandwich tasty and interesting.

KADDERLY:

Yes, bread's a rather bland article. It needs something to pep it up.

VAN DEMAN:

Now to round out this most informal picnic, we'll put a quart or two of ice-cold milk in the basket.

KADDERLY:

What no ice-cold lemonade ... made in the shade?

VAN DEMAN:

Certainly. As many gallons as you're willing to make.

KADDERLY:

I might surprise you at that ... And you know I'm thinking about picnics in general as we've been talking along here. It seems to me they're more casual than they used to be ... less pie and cake baking, fewer fancy salads ... much less cooking up ahead until everybody was worn out ....

VAN DEMAN:

The automobile has changed that - and the park systems. People gather up the food on hand, maybe stop to buy a few things at the grocery store. Anyway, they get into the out of doors quickly, and do their cooking on the spot if they want hot food.

KADDERLY:

Very true. And I think that makes picnics more fun. Well, Ruth, what about some of your home economics bulletins with suggestions for picnic food?

VAN DEMAN:

Um hum. --- We don't have anything directly on picnic food. But the nut leaflet has some good suggestions for sandwiches --- and the baking bulletin tells how to make good whole-wheat bread.

KADDERLY:

Did you bring over copies --- so I can get the titles just right?

VAN DEMAN:

Don't you know I wouldn't dare come near this studio without a home economics bulletin or two --- any more than I'd pack a picnic basket without the sugar and salt? ---

KADDERLY:

That reminds me. I hope I won't forget the knife for the watermelon.--- Well, Farm and Home friends --- (ad lib offer of "Nuts and Ways to Use Them" and "Homemade Bread, Cake, and Pastry.")

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